

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1034

Expressing support for designation of July 2010 as “Braille Literacy Month”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 21, 2010

Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. HARE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. FILNER, Mr. RAHALL, Ms. ROSELEHTINEN, Mr. BOUSTANY, and Mr. KINGSTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for designation of July 2010 as “Braille Literacy Month”.

Whereas since its invention by Louis Braille (1809–1852), the reading and writing code for the blind that bears his name has become the accepted method of reading and writing for the blind the world over;

Whereas the Braille code is used to represent not only the alphabets of most written languages, but is also used for mathematical and scientific notation and the reproduction of musical scores;

Whereas contrary to widely believed myths, Braille is not difficult to learn, nor is reading Braille slower than reading print;

Whereas while technology has improved the lives of blind people by facilitating quick access to information, no technology can replace Braille literacy, since literacy is the ability to read and to write and to do the two interactively;

Whereas despite its efficiency, versatility, and universal acceptance by the blind, the rate of Braille literacy in the United States has declined to the point where only 10 percent of blind children are learning the code;

Whereas just as a literacy rate of 10 percent among this Nation's sighted children would be rightly viewed as a crisis and as cause for national outrage, the decline in Braille literacy is a crisis, and swift action must be taken to reverse this dangerous trend;

Whereas Braille is the key to independence, productivity, and success for blind people, as evidenced by the facts that while 70 percent of the blind are unemployed, 85 percent of those who are employed know Braille;

Whereas the United States Congress officially recognized the importance of Braille and the magnitude of the Braille literacy crisis in 2006 by passing the Louis Braille Bicentennial-Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act authorizing the striking of a United States silver dollar marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille and emphasizing the connection between learning Braille and true independence and opportunity for the blind;

Whereas the National Federation of the Blind, the Nation's oldest and largest organization of blind people and the leading advocate for Braille literacy in the United States, has launched a national "Braille Readers are Leaders" campaign to promote awareness of the importance of

Braille and to increase the availability of competent Braille instruction and of Braille reading materials in this country;

Whereas the National Federation of the Blind is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year; and

Whereas July 2010 would be an appropriate month to designate as “National Braille Literacy Month”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) congratulates the National Federation of
3 the Blind for its 70 years of outstanding service to
4 the blind, especially its fight for an equal education
5 and access to Braille for all blind children in the
6 United States;

7 (2) supports the designation of “National
8 Braille Literacy Month” in recognition of the 70th
9 anniversary of the National Federation of the Blind
10 and of the importance of Braille; and

11 (3) calls upon the people of the United States
12 to recognize the central role that Braille plays in the
13 lives of blind people and to support the efforts of the
14 National Federation of the Blind to promote Braille
15 literacy.

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